



June 2018 - #045

Dear praying friends in Europe –

During the construction of the tower in Babel mankind was already at the point where God said: "See, they are one people, and they all have the same language. This is only the beginning of what they will do. Now all they plan to do will be possible for them" (Genesis 11:6). Babel stands for boundless technical progressive thinking, which ignores God's rightful position as Creator and his orders. The people who built the Tower of Babel were driven by boundless technological creativity. They wanted to put aside all supposed divine limitations and become like God. God's intervention was less an expression of judgment than an act of mercy to protect them from self-destruction.



Dr. Wolfgang Rathmann

Genome editing

A new method of biotechnology is called "CRISPR/Cas9".

Researchers have copied it from bacteria. Bacteria defend themselves against viruses by integrating parts of the virus genome into their own genome. These sections are called CRISPR (Clustered Regularly Interspaced Short Palindromic Repeats). They work like a "detection probe". Cas9 (CRISPR-associated protein 9) is a protein that functions like a "gene scissors". When a virus enters the bacterium, the CRISPR-Cas9 complex searches for the virus genome, cuts it up and makes the virus harmless.

Such gene scissors can be replicated in the laboratory. "CRISPR probes" are programmed to search the genome for any section. This allows gene building blocks to be removed or replaced. The changes caused by CRISPR are not detectable later. Such genetic manipulations have not been possible so far.

The genome of plants, animals and humans can be easily altered. This method is used in plant research to make rice and wheat more resistant to pests. Plants that can withstand climate change are to be developed. With CRISPR/Cas9, the genetic material can be altered faster and more precisely than by breeding. Farm animals that are less susceptible to diseases could also be bred. Mosquitoes could be made resistant to the malaria pathogen.

Please also pray for

- The unity of the Union is at stake as never before. Are you willing to pray for it?
- Wisdom for the new Spanish government to pacify the rebellion in Catalonia..

Doctors hope to be able to cure congenital diseases that are triggered by a single gene mutation, such as muscle atrophy or cystic fibrosis (metabolic disease). Acquired diseases such as cancer could also be treated by interventions in the immune system.

However, many questions remain unanswered. How precisely do the gene scissors cut? How can unwanted, so-called "off-target" effects be prevented if genes are accidentally cut? How do the changes affect the mutual influence of genes?

Basically, a distinction must be made between changes in body cells and those in germ line cells (oocytes and sperm). Changes in the germ line are passed on to future generations. In several European countries, e. g. Germany, intervention in the germ line is currently prohibited. It remains to be seen whether higher intelligence or stronger muscles can also be infiltrated. How far away are we from "man made to measure"?

Prayer:

- Thanks to the Creator, who gave man the spirit of research and for all the good that has been achieved.
- Ask for forgiveness for the way that mankind uses good for evil (sinfulness).
- Pray for the „genome scissors“ to be in Jesus' hand (i.e. intercession for researchers and politicians).